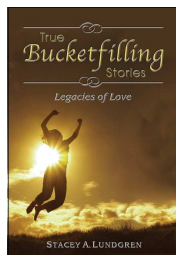




BFL News & Views

September 2010



True Bucketfilling Stories: Legacies of Love, by Stacey A. Lundgren. This wonderful collection of 10 short stories with discussion questions is available at Heartspeak, Inc.



www.heartspeakproducts.com

Other bucket filling products available at Heartspeak:

- Posters
- Pencils
- Bracelets
- Sunglasses
- Piggy Banks
- Backpacks
- T-shirts
- More!

Be sure to also get your copy of Heartspeak's exclusive eBook, "Almost at the Front", a collection of World War II letters by Merrill Lundgren, The Bucket Man.

The Bucket Man Reminisces

By Merrill Lundgren, The Bucket Man

The gravestones in our cemeteries reveal the life span of the deceased by the markings on the gravestone. In my situation, it would read, 1919—?. The dash, beautifully written about in a poem by Linda Ellis, represents our life, and all of the choices we make during that time.

Will you indulge The Bucket Man as he reflects on his Dash? As thinking people approach the end of their dash, their thoughts may include, "Did I make a difference in the lives of others?"

My career life was invested primarily in the life insurance business with two companies: New York Life, 23 years, and Maccabees Mutual, 10 years, as a Salesman, Asst. Manager, Manager, and Sr. V.P. of Marketing. At age 57 I learned about bucket filling at an insurance convention in Acapulco, Mexico. The metaphor of bucket filling impacted me so much, that I resigned my position with Maccabees Mutual to devote the remaining years of my career life to spreading the word about bucket filling.

From age 59 to age 84, I traveled throughout Michigan, making bucket filling presentations to employees of municipalities, hospitals, and other business organizations. In May, 2003, I was asked to do a 6th Grade Career Day presentation at Three Fires School in Howell, Michigan. My first response was, "I don't work with children." But an inspiration came from somewhere, because out of my mouth came the words, "I will come if I can talk about how to be the most popular kid in class." On May 28, 2003, I made the presentation to the class. On that day, the philosophy of bucket filling was introduced to students. To my knowledge, I am

the first person to present this powerful concept as a student program.

Word spread that the bucket filling experience impressed the students to such a degree that calls came in from other schools in the county. As a result of this time in my dash, I had to secure help because of the increased workload. Consequently, I brought Carol McCloud in the business to help me. We worked together doing presentations to schools. Carol was an ideal student. She quickly picked up on the value of bucket filling and was an able presenter. Carol also helped expand our business by creating a web site, and an assembly for K-3 students.

While working with me, Carol wrote a book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today", geared to early elementary students. I wrote the Foreword in the first publication, and joined Carol at many Farmer's Markets and book signings. The book has been a big seller.

In 2006, my daughter Stacey joined the company, then called Bucketfillers.com. Stacey is an experienced and wonderful presenter. Stacey and Carol worked together doing presentations for about 6 months.

Early in 2007, my son Peter joined the company. At about this time, Carol decided to leave and start her own bucket filling company. Her company has been successful.

On July 1st, 2007. Stacey, Peter and I created Bucketfillers For Life, Inc., with Peter as President, Stacey as Vice-President, and me as Founder. I am

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The Bucket Man Reminisces (cont.)

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gratified to know that my work has resulted in 2 companies spreading the message.

Since July 1, 2007, Bucketfillers For Life has enjoyed tremendous success:

- Made presentations to over 300 schools.
- Opened Regional Training Centers in New York, California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Ohio, and most recently, Indiana
- Stacey wrote a book, "True Bucketfilling Stories: Legacies of Love", based on her experiences

in life, and as the lead presenter with BFL. The book was published in 2010 and has enjoyed tremendous success.

- Peter created a company named Heartspeak, Inc.. The company offers products that promote bucket filling in the school and at home. Included in Heartspeak's offerings is an eBook, written by Peter in 1994, and presented to me on Christmas Eve of that year. The book contains excerpts from the hundreds of letters I sent to Edna during my 2 years of service spent in England, France, Belgium and Germany. It is entitled "Almost at the Front", and

has been collected by the World War II Experience Centre, in Leeds England.

As I reminisce on my career, did I make a difference in the lives of others? At the risk of being immodest, my opinion would be that my insurance career was interesting and somewhat fulfilling, but my decision to leave the insurance business at age 59 to spread the bucket filling message gives me assurance that "Yes, I did make a difference." Teaching thousands of students to be "other-centered", kind, and respectful allows me to live my remaining years with that comforting conclusion.

If You Build It...

By Stacey A. Lundgren

As the new school year begins, there is an excitement flowing through the Bucketfillers For Life organization and me that is almost palpable. I'd like to share some of my thoughts and feelings with you about that and other things. Perhaps you will relate.

We are all aware of the many challenges that are going on in the world, our country, cities, and, of course, families. War, the economy, the negative influences of the media, and family problems can be overwhelming if we choose to dwell on them. It seems that everywhere we turn, there is something to worry about, to regret, to resent, to fear. We are constantly bombarded with bad news!

I've had lots of driving time lately which comes with the opportunity to travel to schools in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, my home state. Many times I turn the radio off and, as The Bucket Man says, "contemplate my navel". What do I think about? I reflect upon what just happened at a school. Miracles!

Actually, miracles are all around us. They are happening everywhere, if we only choose to see them. And each and every miracle occurs because of one thing and one thing only. **LOVE**. Each one of us can create miracles, and many of us do.

What are some of these things that I call miracles? Here are a few that I've seen this month; then perhaps your own heart will take over so that you will recognize your own. It is a miracle when I see the faces of young children light up when they understand during a workshop how powerful they are. It is a miracle when a student teacher stands to tearfully share her feelings of love and gratitude for the mother who adopted her at the age of three. It is a miracle that just when I feel a bit homesick after being on the road for some days, kindergarteners surround me in a huge group hug after an assembly. When my 91-year-old father, The Bucket Man, struggles in and out of the car and limps into a school (since this year's hip replacement surgery), *willing* himself to make a difference in children's lives until the age of 95, I call it a miracle. It is miraculous when just

the right people to join our team appear at the perfect time—not because they need a job, but because they want to make a difference.

For several weeks now, I have been thinking about the 1989 movie "Field of Dreams". Remember that one? The famous line from that movie keeps coming to my mind and heart. "*If you build it, they will come.*" When Shoeless Joe Jackson showed up on that baseball diamond, it was indeed a miracle. When I watched the movie, I enjoyed it but never understood the metaphor until this month. "*If you build it, they will come.*" It is true! If we build things with conviction and purpose, out of love, people will come. We all have a field of dreams. It may be a country, our family, a relationship, a business, a classroom or a school. What really matters is that we build it all with love. When we do that, miracles occur. Let's notice them!

Sure, the world is brimming with bad news and life is far from perfect. We can focus on that, or we can choose to notice the miracles and reflect upon them with gratitude. What a great way to fill our own buckets!

Why I Tri

By Faith Smith—BFL New York Regional Director

It's been almost a year since my last submission for the Bucketfilling Newsletter, and I do believe that I mentioned something about a triathlon. It was so far in the future, that surely somebody would forget about it between then and when I was actually supposed to compete. But forget, they did not and sooner rather than later, I found myself all signed up for not just one, but two Sprint Triathlons (a shorter distance triathlon, nothing like an Ironman). Let me also clarify that there would be no 'sprinting' on my behalf.



At first, I was very nonchalant about all of it and I often say that because I have four children, I can do anything. What I tell my children is that you can do anything you set your mind to. But when the time came to start training, I realized that I needed to become a more efficient swimmer if I was going to swim a half mile in open water. So at 38 years old, I took a swimming lesson. How phenomenal that was! For the next 6 weeks, I was in the water practicing with my snorkel, attempting to learn how to do the freestyle so that I wouldn't sink come race day. I eventually ditched the snorkel and moved to an attempt of the freestyle that was more than I ever thought I would be able to do. Each time during training that I had to do an open water swim, I felt nauseous and was snippy towards my family. In the back of my mind I was reminded of Stacey's words during her workshops: "When you face your challenges with courage and confidence, your bucket will be filled." Great advice, but she wasn't in the water!

Along each step of my training, I was surrounded by a group of incredible women. We were all average moms with some athletic experience who decided we wanted to 'tri', to push ourselves a little bit harder and further than we typically would. We spent many early mornings riding or swimming or running. We all kept in touch via email and in that time, we formed a bond and a support network. A bond that was made out of suffering through those runs or bikes or cramps or back pains, but also the joy of those early morning talks during our training...the shared experience of it all.

During the second triathlon, my goal was to just get through the swim (my biggest fear and challenge). Once I did that, I was home free! I came out of the water smiling and ready to tackle the rest of the race. I spent my 18 mile bike ride reflecting on the journey that I had taken and also coming up with what I would write for this article. I will say that the ride became very emotional for me

as I really thought about what I had accomplished, but also because of so many others and other moments that were a part of that journey. Here are some of the reasons "Why I TRI":

- Let's face it, body markings are pretty cool
- For the 73 year old man who was competing in his 6th triathlon that summer
- For the 11 year old girl competing
- Listening to my kids cheer "Go Mommy!"
- Seeing the sign my kids made: Mom is an Athlete!
- Seeing their faces at each transition area
- The beauty of early morning runs and rides
- Accomplishing a half mile open water swim
- Because every time the alarm would go off at O'dark thirty, my husband would say "I'm so proud of you!"
- Early morning running chats
- For the camaraderie
- Watching my mom jump up and down like a monkey at the start of the race knowing that her hips would require a little more physical therapy for it
- Seeing my little sister during the race and being able to yell "I love you"
- The snacks after the race
- Because I have strong legs
- For all of those who want to but are unable...John and Joseph
- For Aaron who will never have the chance to Tri
- Because I want to be a role model for my kids
- Because I can



All of these reasons make me count my blessings and remind me of how much I can do once I set my mind to it. They also remind me just how full my bucket is.

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